

Unsolicited Commercial or Political Voice-mail will Never be Okay

Consumers do not want spam in a new format, particularly one which requires extra time and effort to deal with. Email spam can often be recognized from the Subject line alone, and one click deletes it. With Voice-mail you have to *listen* to at least part of each message before deleting, *and there is no way to scan your messages to find the one you are looking for* and leave the possibly-Spam messages for later. Allowing undesired messages in voice-mail is a **Bad Thing**.

Many negative consequences might ensue:

1. The Voice-mail Industry will Collapse: Too many intrusions and people will simply stop listening to their voice-mail because it takes too much time and frustration. At that point VM will cease to be a reliable way to get in touch with someone, and many people will simply stop using Voice-mail.

This is already happening with email! Try to use email to contact someone under 25 – chances are your message will never be read, because younger generations simply find email to be too burdensome, and don't use it regularly.

Excessive email has many causes, including friends and family who send too many “reply all” messages etc. But unsolicited political and commercial email (including “surveys” and other sanctioned e-commerce contacts) add up to a burden which puts email at the edges of irrelevance for younger audiences. Don't let voice-mail go down this path!

2. More use of encrypted services: If texts and voice-mail become too bogged down with spam, people will switch to encrypted services which block anonymous messages or messages from any non-individual not on a “white list”.

3. “Voice spam filter” technology will spring up and cost consumers money: If unsolicited, unwanted, and unstoppable VM messages are allowed, consumers will demand that junk messages be automatically deleted or moved to a “junk voice-mail box”. This will be costly (any high-tech is). A certain percent of legitimate messages will be lost (i.e. falsely flagged as spam). Some people will be falsely identified as professional spammers and unable to leave any voice-mails anywhere.

AI (Artificial Intelligence) will be used to automatically detect voice-mail spam. Secret “black lists” of voice prints and patterns of speech will be used to “disappear” communications which match these patterns. Consumers will, for the most part, applaud these developments, but the technology will not be transparent or usefully controllable by consumers (and turning off filtering altogether will not be a practical option if VM would then be flooded by sanctioned spam).

4. Cyber Abuse: Hack the spam-blockers and you could prevent *anyone's* voice-mails from ever being delivered. Think about that.